POSITIVE ATTITUDE- If You Believe You Can, You Can

“Genius is 99% perspiration and 1%inspiration. “If we did all the things we were capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves. “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.” (Thomas Edison)

If you desire to be an effective leader, having a positive attitude is inessential. It is not only determines your level of contentment as a person, but it also has an impact on how others interact with you.

*Your attitude is a choice. No matter what happened to you yesterday, your attitude is your choice today. Your attitude determines your actions. You can choose your attitude, you can change it.*

When you meet people, do you tell yourself they’ll let you down? When you face new experiences, does a voice in your head say you’re going to fail?

**To improve your attitude, do the following:**

* Feed yourself the right “food.” If you’ve been starved of anything positive, then you need to start feeding yourself a regular diet of motivational material.
* Achieve a goal every day. Set achievable daily goals for yourself. A pattern of positive achievement will help you develop a pattern of positive thinking.
* Write it on your wall. As incentive, people put up awards they’ve won, inspirational posters or letters they’ve received. Find something that will work for you.

**PROBLEM SOLVING- You Can’t Let Your Problems Be A Problem**

“You can measure a leader by the problems he tackles. He always looks for ones his own size.”

~John C. Maxwell

Leaders With Good Problems Solving Abilities Demonstrate Five Qualities:

They Anticipate Problems

 They Accept the Truth

They See the Big Picture

They Handle One Thing At a Time

 They Don’t Give Up On a Major Goal when they’re down

No matter what field a leader is in, he or she will face problems. They are inevitable for three reasons.

1. We live in a world of growing complexity and diversity.
2. We interact with people
3. We cannot control all the situations we face. Leaders with good problem-solving ability anticipate problems, accept the truth and handle one thing at a time. They see the big picture and they don’t give up a major goal when they’re down.

**To improve your problem solving, do the following:**

* Look for trouble. If you’ve been avoiding problems, go out looking for them. You’ll only get better if you gain experience dealing with them.
* Develop a method. Some people have a hard time solving problems because they don’t know how to tackle them. Try using the TEACH process:

*Time* — Spend time to discover the real issue.

*Exposure* — Find out what others have done.

*Assistance* — Have your team study all angles.

*Creativity* — Brainstorm multiple solutions.

*Hit it* — Implement the best solution.

* Surround yourself with problem solvers. If you aren’t a good problem solver, bring others onto your team who are. They will immediately complement your weaknesses and you will also learn from them.

**RELATIONSHIPS - If You Get Along, They’ll Get Along**

“The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along

with people.” *(~Theodore Roosevelt, American President)*

**All people have some things in common:**

* They like to feel special, so sincerely compliment them.
* They want a better tomorrow, so show them hope.
* They desire direction, so navigate for them.
* They are selfish, so speak to their needs first.
* They get low emotionally, so encourage them.
* They want success, so help them win.

The ability to work with people and develop relationships is absolutely indispensable to effective leadership. People truly do want to go along with people they get along with. And while someone can have people skills and not be a good leader, he or she cannot be a good leader without people skills. Never underestimate the power of relationships on people’s lives. If your relational skills are weak, your leadership will always suffer.

**To improve your relationships, do the following:**

* Improve your mind. If your ability to understand people needs improvement jump-start it by reading books on the subject, then spend more time observing people and talking to them to apply what you’ve learned.
* Strengthen your heart. Make a list of little things you could do to add value to friends and colleagues. Then try to do one of them every day. Don’t wait until you feel like it to help others.
* Repair a hurting relationship. Think of a valued long-term relationship that has faded. Do what you can to rebuild it.

**RESPONSIBILITY- If You Won’t Carry the Ball, You Can’t Lead the Team**

“Success on any major scale requires you to accept responsibility . . . In the final analysis, the one quality that all successful people have is the ability to take on responsibility.”

*(Michael Korda, Editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster)*

Good leaders never embrace a victim mentality. They recognize that who and where they are remain their responsibility –– not that of their parents, their spouses, their children, the government, their bosses or their coworkers. They face whatever life throws at them and give it their best, knowing that they will get an opportunity to lead the team only if they’ve proved that they can carry the ball.

People who embrace responsibility get the job done. They’re willing to do whatever it takes to complete the work needed by the organization. If you want to lead, you’ve got to produce.

**To improve your responsibility, do the following:**

* Keep hanging in there. Sometimes an inability to deliver despite difficult circumstances can be due to a persistence problem. The next time you find yourself in a situation where you’re going to miss a deadline, lose a deal or fail to get a program off the ground, stop and figure out how to succeed. Think outside the lines. Creativity can bring responsibility to life.
* Admit what’s not good enough. If you have trouble achieving excellence, maybe you’ve lowered your standards. Look for places where you’ve let things slip. Then make changes to set higher standards.
* Find better tools. If you find that your standards are high, your attitude is good and you consistently work hard but you still don’t achieve the way you’d like –– get better equipped. Improve your skills by taking classes, reading books and listening to tapes. Find a mentor. Do whatever it takes to become better at what you do.

**SECURITY- Competence Never Compensates For Insecurity**

“No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit for doing it.”

*(Andrew Carnegie, Industrialist)*

Insecure leaders are dangerous — to themselves, their followers and the organizations they lead — because a leadership position amplifies personal flaws. Insecure leaders have several common traits: They don’t provide security for others; they take more from people than they give, they continually limit their best people and they continually limit the organization.

In contrast, secure leaders are able to believe in others because they believe in themselves. They aren’t arrogant; they know their own strengths and weaknesses; and they respect themselves. When their people perform well, they don’t feel threatened. They go out of their way to bring the best people together and then build them up so that they will perform at the highest level. And when a secure leader’s team succeeds, it brings him or her great joy. Don’t let insecurity prevent you from reaching your potential.

**To improve your security, do the following:**

* Know yourself. If you are the kind of person who is not naturally self-aware, take time to learn about yourself. Ask people who know you well to name your three greatest talents and your three greatest weaknesses and then reflect on it.
* Give away the credit. If you assist others and acknowledge their contributions, you will help their careers, lift their morale and improve the organization.
* Get some help. If you cannot overcome feelings of insecurity on your own, seek professional help.
* Get to the root of your problems not only for your own benefit but also that of your people.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE- The First Person You Lead Is You**

“A man without a decision of character can never be said to belong to himself. . . He belongs to whatever can make captive of him.”

(John Foster, author)

No one achieves and sustains success without self-discipline. It positions a leader to go to the highest level and a key to leadership that lasts. If you can determine what a priority is really and release yourself from everything else, it’s a lot easier to follow through on what’s important. And that’s the essence of self-discipline.

Self-discipline can’t be a one-time event. It has to become a lifestyle. To develop a lifestyle of discipline, one of your tasks must be to challenge and eliminate any tendency to make excuses. The next time you’re facing a must-do task and you’re thinking of doing what’s convenient instead of paying the price, change your focus. Count the benefits of doing what’s right and then dive in.

If you know you have talent and you’ve seen a lot of motion — but little concrete results — you may lack self-discipline.

**To improve your self-discipline, do the following:**

* Sort out your priorities. Think about which two or three areas of life are most important to you and the disciplines that you must develop to keep growing and improving in those areas.
* List the reasons. Write out the benefits of practicing the disciplines you’ve just listed. Post the benefits where you will see them daily. On the days when you don’t want to follow through, reread your list.
* Get rid of excuses. Write down every reason why you might not be able to follow through with your disciplines. Even if a reason seems legitimate, find a solution to overcome it. Don’t leave yourself any reasons to quit.

**SERVANTHOOD- To Get Ahead, Put Others First**

“The true leader serves. Serves people. Serves their best interests, and in so doing will not always be popular, may not always impress. But because true leaders are motivated by loving concern rather than a desire for personal glory, they are willing to pay the price.”

*(Eugene B. Habecker, Author)*

Servanthood is not about position or skill. It’s about attitude. You have undoubtedly met people in service positions who have poor attitudes toward servanthood: the rude worker at the government agency, the waiter who can’t be bothered with taking your order, and the store clerk who talks on the phone with a friend instead of helping you.

Just as you can sense when a worker doesn’t want to help people, you can just as easily detect whether a leader has a servant’s heart. And the truth is that the best leaders desire to serve others, not themselves. The first mark of servanthood is the ability to put others ahead of yourself and your personal desires.

Where is your heart when it comes to serving others? Are you motivated by a desire to help others?

**To improve your servanthood, do the following:**

* Perform small acts. Find ways to do small things that show others that you care.
* Learn to walk slowly through the crowd. The next time you attend a function make it your goal to connect with others by circulating among them and talking to people; getting to know their needs, wants and desires.
* Move into action. If an attitude of servanthood is conspicuously absent from your life, the best way to change it is to start serving. Sign up to serve others at your church, a community agency or a volunteer organization.

**TEACHABILITY- To Keep Leading, Keep Learning**

“It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.”

*(John Wooden, Hall of Fame Basketball Coach)*

Leaders face the danger of contentment with the status quo. After all, if a leader already possesses influence and has achieved a level of respect, why should he or she keep growing? The answer is –– *your growth determines who you are, and who you are determines who you attract, and who you attract determines the success of your organization.*

If you want to grow your organization, you have to remain teachable. Some people mistakenly believe that if they can accomplish a particular goal, they no longer have to grow. It can happen with almost anything: earning a degree, reaching a desired position, receiving a particular award or achieving financial goal. But effective leaders cannot afford to think that way. The day they stop growing is the day they forfeit their potential — and the potential of the organization.

If you’re not where you hoped you would be by this time in your life, your problem may be lack of teachability.

**To improve your teachability, do the following:**

* Observe how you react to mistakes. Do you admit your mistakes? Do you apologize when appropriate? Or are you defensive? If you react badly –– or make no mistakes at all –– you need to work on your teachability.
* Try something new. Go out of your way to do something different that will stretch you mentally, emotionally or physically.
* Learn in your area of strength. Continue to learn in an area where you are already an expert. This prevents you from becoming jaded and unteachable.

**VISION - You Can Seize Only What You Can See**

“A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.”

~ John C. Maxwell

Vision is everything for a leader. It is utterly indispensable. Why? Because vision leads the leader. It paints the target. It sparks and fuels the fire within, and draws him or her forward. It is also the fire lighter for others who follow that leader.

Show me a leader without vision and I’ll show you someone who isn’t going anywhere. At best, he or she is traveling in circles. When you look deep into your heart and soul for a vision, what do you see?

**To improve your vision, do the following:**

* Measure yourself. Talk to your spouse, a close friend and key employees. Ask them to state what they think your vision is. If they can articulate it, then you are probably living it.
* Write it down. If you’ve thought about your vision but never put it in writing, take the time to do it. Once you’ve written it, evaluate whether it is worthy of your life’s best. Then pursue it with all you’ve got.
* Do a gut check. If you haven’t done a lot of work on vision, spend the next several weeks or months thinking about it. Consider what really impacts you at a gut level. What makes you cry? What makes you dream? What gives you energy? And think about what you’d like to see change in the world around you. What do you see that isn’t –– but could be?

**CONCLUSION & ADVICE**

Keep growing as a leader. Put yourself on a regular program where you consistently read books, listen to tapes and attend conferences that stretch you. Find other leaders who will mentor you. The only way to become the kind of leader that people want to follow is to keep growing and learning about leadership.